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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI GOVERNMENT, CONSTITUTION, TERRORISM; BAGHDAD

SUMMARY: Discussion on the Constitution and Terrorism were the major editorial themes of the daily newspapers on September 22, 2005. END SUMMARY.

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SELECTED COMENTRES

- [1A.](#) "Fire Beneath the Ashes"
(Ad-Dawa, affiliated with Islamic Ad-Dawa Party, published this page-four editorial by Nuha Al-Musawi)

"We want to know where our country is heading. Violence is increasing and rivers of blood are flowing in Iraq--starting from the Al-Kadumiya Bridge (that led to hundreds of casualties) to the terrorist attacks in Al-Aruba Square, Taji, and other cities. All of those attacks were intended to kill Shiites. It seems that Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi has imbued terrorism with sectarian bent when he declared war on Shiites.

"Terrorism started in Iraq with the killing of Shiites immediately after the downfall of Saddam. Those operations began with the assassination of Muhammad Baqr Al-Hakim and hundreds of others praying inside the Imam Ali Shrine in Najaf. After that, many terrorist attacks followed such as Al-Kadumiya Bridge that led to the killing of hundreds of Shiites. Another attack targeted Shiite laborers in Al-Aruba Square in Kadumiya and yet another targeted a Shiite mosque in Tuz in the northern part of Iraq. This shows definitively that Shiites are being killed solely because they are Shiite.

"Sectarian conflict has been unleashed and reasoned calls cannot stop it. Iraq has become a minefield. Unfortunately, the [Sunni] Muslim Scholars Association has issued statements describing Al-Zarqawi as a brother though it called on him to stop threatening Shiites. In fact, their description of Zarqawi as a brother has many interpretations and could mean that they support him.

"I think we have to convene a national reconciliation conference between Sunnis and Shiites--a conference that must be based on mutual respect. Terrorist operations have increased and the ghost of secession is haunting Iraq. We want to know if Washington has an interest in provoking sectarian violence and we would also like to know if the Americans have a role in encouraging this sedition.

"Most Iraqis were optimistic in the beginning however, this optimism has started to fade into pessimism which may lead to a mere mirage of freedom and democracy. We know one important fact: one match stick can burn an entire forest."

- [1B.](#) "They Have Oil and You Have Water"
(Al-Mashriq, independent, anti coalition, published this front-page editorial by Hamid Abdullah)
"The new Iraqi constitution has caused some Sunni Arabs, as some provocative media outlets call them, to threaten to stop the flow of water to any region that supports federalism or separation from the rest of Iraq. Sunnis are trying to use the Euphrates as a weapon against other groups that call for the establishment of federalism. It now seems that we have a new program that can be called oil for water rather than oil for food. But, this time, the program is not a deal between the United Nations and Iraq but it is between the Shiites and Sunnis.

"An American analyst has labeled Iraqi Sunnis 'the poor cousins' because their land lacks resources and is situated between two wealthy regions. The first is in the north, which depends on the oil of Kirkuk, and the second is in the south which depends on oil from the Rumaila oil fields. While the Sunni heartland of Ramadi, Baghdad, Al-Qa'im, Ana and Haditha has nothing but wide swaths of desert and waterwheels. But, this territory is the gateway to Iraq's rivers and thus can prevent water from flowing to any other areas. I think that this weapon is very effective.
"I just want to know if there is any country like Iraq that has two rivers, dozens of lakes, oil, phosphorus, red

mercury, copper, sulfur, mountains, plains, deserts, date palms, pine trees, Sunnis, Shiites, Kurds, Turkmen, Sabeans and Yazidis? But, do not ask me where the Arabs are because they have been diluted amongst various religions and sects and thus there is no need to mention them. A country like Iraq, which has a diversity of ethnicities and religions, is inherently unstable because it is contrary to the interests of the political players."

[1C](#). "The Constitution and Iraqi Personal Freedom"
(Az-Zaman, independent, anti-coalition, published this page-seven editorial by Sundus Abbas)

"All Iraqis, especially women, were eager to see the draft constitution as they thought it would help achieve national unity. Actually, Iraqi women have worked hard since the beginning of the establishment of democracy in the new Iraq to guarantee their full rights in the draft constitution. We haven't found anything in the draft constitution that contradicts the contents of the personal status law (Law #188 which was legislated in 1959).

"But, the most important thing is that the constitutional committee keeps insisting on inserting the following text in Article 39: 'Iraqis are free in abiding by their personal status according to their religions, ideologies, choices, or beliefs.' The same statement was repeated in Article 14 of the constitution which stated Iraqis are equal in front of the law without discrimination due to sect, ethnicity, opinion or socio-economic status. This looks like we have invented something strange and new in Iraqi society which is characterized by the depth of its civilization, or the development and harmony of its communities.

"Article 39 is not relevant only to women but it addresses the unity of the entire society. How can we anticipate the orientations of all of the different appeals and legislative courts? Is there any need to enact a civil law for personal affairs while there are legislative courts present? Amid the current deterioration of security and economic conditions, can we expect these courts to be successful? Perhaps, this article seems to be a good example of freedom but, such freedom is hindered and cannot be achieved in our environment.

"We think that this text represents an attempt to cancel the achievements of Law #188, enacted in 1959 which Iraqi women obtained through a half-century long suffrage. Iraqi women opposed Law #137 in 2003, which was legislated by the former Interim Governing Council, and included the essential components of Article 39. However, this law was suspended due to opposition from Iraqi women. For that reason, the CPA administrator decided to annul the law."

KHALILZAD